

Thursday, May 12, 2005 – 2:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

GATEWAY CITIES SERVICE SECTOR COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

The Gas Company
9240 Firestone Blvd.
Downey, CA 90241

Called to Order at 2:10 p.m.

Council Members Present:

Larry R. Nelson (Vice Chair)
Samuel Peña (Past Chair)
JoAnn Eros-Delgado
Jacqueline Rynerson
Wally Shidler
Cynde Soto

Officers:

Alex Clifford, General Manager
Dave Hershenson, Community Relations Manager
Sharon Sterling, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

Chair Bonnie Lowenthal was recently appointed to the MTA Board. Past Chair Samuel Peña announced that he would preside over the Council Meeting until Vice Chair Larry R. Nelson arrived.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Called
3. Self Introductions
4. APPROVED Minutes of April 14, 2005 Council Meeting
5. RECEIVED Report of General Manager

Mr. Clifford announced that the Annual Meet and Confer meeting has been rescheduled for Monday, May 23rd at 4:00 P.M. at the MTA Gateway Building.

Mr. Clifford reviewed the March 2005 Gateway Cities Operations Report with the Councilmembers.

Mr. Hershenson provided the Councilmembers with an event calendar for May through December 2005.

6. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED staff's Revised Service Plan for Line 270 and staff's recommendation to withdraw the proposal to modify Line 275 that was originally presented at the August 12, 2004 Gateway Cities Public Hearing.

Mr. Clifford stated that the Council postponed a decision on Line 270 and 275 until the Spring of 2005 to allow additional time to work with Norwalk Transit, which had expressed concern about potential duplication of service along a 2.8 mile segment of Imperial Highway. MTA and Norwalk staff has conducted a number of joint meetings since last Fall to discuss this matter, and the latest staff recommendation is fully supported by Norwalk Transit.

A letter was received and distributed from Norwalk Transit expressing gratitude regarding the process to resolve this issue and the Gateway Cities staff recommendation.

Under public comment, Mark Strickert expressed concern regarding service on Comstock in uptown Whittier.

George Poochigian, Board Vice President of Comstock Condo Association, represented thirty-six condominium unit families. He stated that they want Line 270 eliminated through their neighborhood.

Staff reported that if approved, the proposed new alignment of Line 270 would resolve the concerns expressed under public comment.

7. RECEIVED a Presentation on Metro's draft Wheelchair Securement Policy and other related ADA issues by Chip Hazen, Metro ADA Compliance Administrator.

Mr. Hazen reported that to comply with ADA law, every operator shall afford customers with disabilities equal access to Metro services. If, for any reason, a customer using a wheelchair as defined in the Operator Rule Book is denied service, the operator shall immediately notify Bus Operations Control (BOC) of the customer's location, destination, number in party and reason the customer could not be accommodated.

Mr. Hazen also discussed the boarding, securing and alighting of wheelchair customers; use of lift, ramp, or kneeling device; wheelchair securement and securement locations; and training protocol for boarding, securing and alighting.

Mr. Peña stated that there should be a penalty for a passenger who does not relinquish his seat for a wheelchair patron.

Ms. Soto states that she rides the bus often in her wheelchair and it normally takes one minute or less to secure it. Long Beach Transit requires the use of four securement devices.

Mr. Nelson was concerned regarding the 600-pound weight limit to use the wheelchair lift. Mr. Hazen stated that the lift will not support the excess weight.

Mr. Nelson stated that if the wheelchair lift is not working when the bus arrives the operator should call for another bus.

Mr. Peña stated that the operator's responsibility is to assure that the equipment works.

Mr. Hazen stated that the operator must advise the BOC of the defective wheelchair lift before the bus is removed from the division.

Mr. Clifford stated that a van would be sent out for the customer if the service is of a certain frequency.

Ms. Owens stated that the BOC would contact a supervisor van to assist the customer.

Mr. Nelson asked how often is the tie-down system checked and maintained.

Mr. Clifford stated that preventative maintenance is performed on the buses and at least one person at the division is a wheelchair lift expert.

Mr. Hazen stated that the wheelchair should be secured on the bus so it does not move more than two inches. Some passengers do not want the wheelchair secured.

Ms. Rynerson asked if a passenger refuses to have the wheelchair secured and another passenger is hit, is the disabled person held liable separately from the MTA. Mr. Hazen replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Shidler stated that a Line 60 operator was extra helpful and got off the bus to assist a

passenger in a manual wheelchair to board.

Mr. Peña asked has the definition of wheelchair changed. Mr. Hazen stated it has not.

Mr. Peña expressed security and liability concerns for wheelchair passengers and others. He asked about any additional language for securement of passenger.

Mr. Hazen stated it is include in the ADA Policy.

Mr. Peña asked how much time would it take to train all the operators.

Mr. Hazen stated approximately eight months. Mr. Hazen stated the draft policy will be presented to the MTA Board for approval.

8. RECEIVED a Presentation on Rapid Stop Warrants and Local Bus Stop Locations by Pete Serdenis, Metro Facilities Maintenance Manager, Stops & Zones and Steve Fox, Transportation Planning Manager.

Mr. Serdenis reported that the Metro Rapid Program principal is to improve operating speed and frequency. The program goal involves the minimum operating speed improvements of 20% over existing limited-stop service or 25% over existing local service.

Mr. Fox stated there are currently eleven Metro Rapids and the service warrants optimization of operating speeds through free running time. The Transit Service Policy defines parameters of how service is to be planned and operated.

9. RECEIVED a Presentation on Metro's Mystery Rider Program and Customer Comment Update by Donna LaFont, Sr. Marketing and Communications Officer and Warren Morse, Metro Communications DEO.

Ms. LaFont reported that the objective of the Mystery Rider Rewards and Recognition Program is to evaluate product and service delivery; reward high quality performance; identify emerging service quality issues; and monitor improvement strategies and actions.

Mr. Peña asked what is the next step if the mystery rider reports a problem observed on the bus.

Ms. LaFont stated that a supervisor or manager might be required to ride the bus.

Mr. Peña asked how many survey cards are done at divisions 1 and 2.

Ms. LaFont stated that the program has not started and it must be presented to the union first.

Mr. Shidler asked if the operator would be aware of the mystery rider.

Ms. LaFont stated the operator would not. However, they are encouraging mangers to introduce themselves.

Ms. Soto asked if there would be questions on the survey that deal with people with disabilities.

Ms. LaFont stated she has discussed this with Mr. Hazen and he has an ADA questionnaire to incorporate.

Mr. Morse reported that customer contacts are received via phone, letters, e-mails and walk-in customers. An average of 75% of the contacts are schedule-related, pass-ups, unsafe operation and operator discourtesy. The information is placed in PCMS and sent to the divisions for investigation/action. Weekly and monthly reports are sent to management.

Mr. Morse stated 2500-3000 telephone calls are received per month of which 1200-1500 are filed as complaints.

Mr. Peña stated that the PCMS form should have an area designated for operator's comments and division findings.

Mr. Nelson asked why a decal cannot be placed on the bus with the Customer Service phone number and information required.

Mr. Morse stated it is more cost effective to use a car card.

Mr. Shidler stated the Customer Service phone number (213-626-4455) is only on 40% of the timetables.

Mr. Morse stated the timetables are being redesigned and the number should appear on all of them.

Ms. Owens stated that the public should be educated on what is necessary to investigate the complaint, such as, operator badge number, line number, time, date and location of incident.

Ms. Eros-Delgado inquired if the information on an operator who received ten complaints in ten months appears in the database.

Mr. Morse replied in the affirmative. He also noted that on 1-800-COMMUTE there is a front-end message that directs the caller to Customer Service.

10. RECEIVED Councilmembers' Remarks

- Approved Shidler Motion to recommend at the upcoming "Meet and Confer" meeting that each sector be allowed to present to the MTA Board at the joint meeting in June.
- Mr. Nelson provided an update on recent Channel 2 news story on MTA Bus Operators.

Mr. Clifford provided Council with a copy of the Board Box report on the Channel 2 expose.

- Mr. Shidler will be attending the South Bay Sector Council meeting on Saturday at Carson Division 18 and provide a historical display at the open house.

11. RECEIVED Chairperson's Remarks

Mr. Peña stated that Council elections for Chair and Vice Chair will be held next month.

12. Consideration of Items not posted on the Agenda – None.

13. Public Comment on Items not posted on the Agenda

Linda Vins stated that Line 18 to Whittier & Garfield does not make connections with Montebello Transit.

MTA staff will communicate this concern to Montebello Transit.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, June 9, 2005

**The Gas Company
9240 Firestone Blvd.
Downey, CA 90241**

Adjourned at 4:05 p.m.



Prepared by: Sharon Sterling
Council Secretary